

# Woodlands Apiary



September 4, 2013

The 2013 beekeeping season is now drawing to a close, so it is time to gather in the honey and complete a few housekeeping chores around the apiary.

But first, we have to deal with the pests and diseases:-

**Wax Moth:** At this time of year the hives are under attack by the two prevalent species of wax moth – **Greater** (*Galleria mellonella*) and the **Lesser** (*Achroia grisella*) – a strong colony has adequate resources to self-manage against these comb eating pests but in a weak hive, or when the frames are placed in overwinter storage, the larvae-stage comb damage can be devastating,



When active in a working hive the larvae caterpillar stage can be selectively picked out of the comb or if the frames are for storage leaving these in a freezer cabinet for 48 hours is sufficient to kill off any adults, larvae and eggs – there is freezer space available at the Farm but the hive boxes must be completely wrapped and sealed in polythene for this method of eradication in the freezer cabinet – please seek the agreement of the Farm Manager before using the freezer.



**Varroa Destructor:** One benefit of the unusual weather conditions this year is that the incident of the mite has been relatively low throughout the Apiary with some of the colonies having no or little infestation – I suggest that we deal with this on a hive-by-hive basis using a low dose varroacide – for more information on management of the varroa mite refer to FERA [Beebase](#).

**Invasion of the Asian Hornet:** One of these honey bee eating beasties (*Vespa velutina*) has been allegedly spotted hovering around Maidstone in Kent. It can be distinguished from the European hornet (*Vespa crabro*) by its single yellow abdominal band and distinctive yellow lower parts of its legs – this photo shows that it looks absolutely nothing like a 1960s Italian motor scooter but if I correctly recall my Mods and Rocker days, it is probably just as deadly!



We could place some hornet traps about the Apiary – if you would like to try your hand at making a trap see [FERA](#) for details.

**Topsy Turvy Year:** We are having to bear the consequences of the unusual weather that has been so influential on apiary activities this year. For example, honey yield from the Woodlands Farm hives was relatively low at just over 160lbs from the six most active hives; we have suffered a number of colony losses, despite having requeened where the stock was floundering – one Woodlands and both the Walpole hives completely self-evacuated late in the season (August), and a number of stocks remain weak and may have to be combined to survive the forthcoming winter.

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Whatever, there is always the 2014 Season for which should now prepare.

**Things to Do during September:** For bedding down the colonies for overwintering, please:-

- those colonies covering under five brood frames will have difficulty surviving a harsh winter, so consider rehousing in an insulated or polystyrene brood box, and/or recombining two stocks into one
- fit mouse guards to hive entrances but make sure there remains sufficient through ventilation in the hive
- strip all unnecessary supers and frames from the hives, leaving sufficient space for the added sugar syrup feed – remove all queen excluders – clean down the various equipment for overwinter storage in the Weaning Shed bee bay (see previous freezer cabinet application)
- if necessary, sugar syrup feed to supplement retained honey stores – delay sugar feeding until the brood laying rate has significantly slowed – for the stronger stocks about 20kg of syrup feed is required – the English Blacks require somewhat less, about 10 to 15kg – more details from [FERA](#).
- set aside the honey tithe for Woodlands Farm Trust in  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb jars – since both Walpole hives have been lost, could we consider donating some of our honey to Walpole – please let me have your suggestions on this.
- put up the woodpecker deterrent lines with dangling CD Roms

John Large